

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A surgical implant for replacing functions of a facet joint between adjacent vertebrae, the surgical implant comprising:
 - a first biocompatible attachment device for attaching to a first pedicle of a superior vertebrae;
 - a second biocompatible attachment device for attaching to a second pedicle of an inferior vertebrae; and
 - a flexible member attached to the first and second biocompatible attachment devices; wherein the first and second biocompatible attachment devices are positioned, and the flexible member is adapted, so that the surgical implant applies a distracting force between the first and second pedicles of the superior and inferior vertebrae sufficient for selectively maintaining the first and second pedicles at a predetermined distance.
2. (Original) The surgical implant of claim 1 wherein the flexible member is further adapted to be compressed in response to a second force that exceeds the distracting force.
3. (Original) The surgical implant of claim 1 wherein the flexible member includes a joint component positioned between the first and second biocompatible attachment devices.
4. (Original) The surgical implant of claim 3 wherein the flexible member further includes a first flexible member connected between the first biocompatible attachment device and the joint component, and a second flexible member connected between the second biocompatible attachment device and the joint component, and wherein the first and second flexible members are connected together at the joint component and are adapted to rotate relative to each other at the joint component.

Claims 5-7. (Cancelled).

8. (Currently amended) A prosthetic device for replacing functions of a facet joint between adjacent vertebrae, the prosthetic device comprising:

means for providing one or more flexible posterior devices to replace main functions of the facet joint; and

means for adapting a first one of the one or more posterior devices for a first attachment to a first transverse process, and a second attachment to a second transverse process, and wherein the one or more flexible posterior devices includes a joint component positioned between the first and second biocompatible attachment devices.

9. (Original) The prosthetic device of claim 8 further comprising:

means for removing at least a portion of the facet joint.

10. (Original) The prosthetic device of claim 8 further comprising:

means for adapting a second one of the one or more posterior devices for attachments to articular processes.

11. (Original) The prosthetic device of claim 8 further comprising:

means for adapting a second one of the one or more posterior devices for attachments to spinous processes.

12. (Original) The prosthetic device of claim 8 further comprising:

means for adapting a second one of the one or more posterior devices for attachments to laminae.

Claims 13-36. (Cancelled).

37. (Original) An anterior prosthetic device system for replacing functions of a facet joint between adjacent vertebrae, the anterior prosthetic device system comprising:

means for providing one or more flexible anterior devices to replace main functions of the facet joint; and

means for adapting a first one of the one or more anterior devices for insertion between adjacent vertebral bodies.

38. (Original) The anterior prosthetic device system of claim 37 further comprising:

means for removing at least a portion of the facet joint.

39. (Original) The anterior prosthetic device system of claim 37 further comprising:

means for adapting a second one of the one or more anterior devices for insertion between the adjacent vertebral bodies.

40. (New) The surgical implant of claim 3 wherein the joint component is configured to allow motion at the facet joint.

41. (New) The surgical implant of claim 3 wherein the flexible member attaches to the adjacent vertebrae only at the first and second biocompatible attachment devices.

42. (New) The surgical implant of claim 1 wherein the flexible member further includes:

a first component comprising:

an elongated body; and

a first joint having a first opening wherein the first opening contains an elastic material;

a second component comprising:

an elongated body; and

a second joint having a second opening wherein the second joint is coupled with the first joint, and the second opening contains the elastic material; and

a connector covering the first joint and the second joint wherein the connector comprises the elastic material.

43. (New) The posterior device of claim 42 wherein the first component further comprises a pointed tip adapted for percutaneous insertion of the posterior device.

44. (New) The posterior device of claim 42 wherein the second component further comprises a pointed tip adapted for percutaneous insertion of the posterior device.

45. (New) The posterior device of claim 42 wherein the connector is olive-shaped.

46. (New) The posterior device of claim 42 wherein the first component and the second component are coupled at an angle of approximately 45° to the horizon to simulate the orientation of the facet joint.

47. (New) The posterior device of claim 42 wherein the first component and the second component are coupled at an angle of approximately 60° to an axial plane and 20° to an frontal plane of a human body.

48. (New) The posterior device of claim 42 wherein the first component and the second component are coupled at an angle of approximately 90° to an axial plane and 45° to an frontal plane of a human body.

49. (New) The surgical implant of claim 8 wherein the joint component is configured to allow motion at the facet joint.

50. (New) The surgical implant of claim 8 wherein the flexible member attaches to the adjacent vertebrae only at the first and second biocompatible attachment devices.

51. (New) The surgical implant of claim 8 wherein the one or more flexible posterior devices comprises:

- a first elongated body; and
- a second an elongated body,

wherein the joint includes a first element associated with the first elongated body, the first element having a first opening containing an elastic material, and a second element associated with the second elongated body, the second element having a second opening, wherein the second element is coupled with the first element, and the second opening contains the elastic material; and

a connector covering the first joint and the second joint wherein the connector comprises the elastic material.

52. (New) The posterior device of claim 51 wherein the first component further comprises a pointed tip adapted for percutaneous insertion of the posterior device.

53. (New) The posterior device of claim 51 wherein the second component further comprises a pointed tip adapted for percutaneous insertion of the posterior device.

54. (New) The posterior device of claim 51 wherein the connector is olive-shaped.

55. (New) The posterior device of claim 51 wherein the first component and the second component are coupled at an angle of approximately 45° to the horizon to simulate the orientation of the facet joint.

56. (New) The posterior device of claim 51 wherein the first component and the second component are coupled at an angle of approximately 60° to an axial plane and 20° to an frontal plane of a human body.

57. (New) The posterior device of claim 51 wherein the first component and the second component are coupled at an angle of approximately 90° to an axial plane and 45° to an frontal plane of a human body.

58. (New) The surgical implant of claim 8 wherein the one or more flexible posterior devices comprises:

- a first elongated body; and

- a second elongated body,

wherein the joint includes a first element associated with the first elongated body, the first element having a first opening, and a second element associated with the second elongated body, wherein the second element is coupled with the first element and wherein the joint is configured to provide motion to the flexible posterior device during use.

59. (New) The surgical implant of claim 1 wherein the flexible member further includes:

- a first component comprising:

- an elongated body; and

- a first joint having a first opening;

- a second component comprising:

- an elongated body; and

- a second joint coupled with the first joint, wherein the first and second joints are configured to provide motion to the flexible posterior device during use.